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Department of State TELEGRAM

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CONFIDENTIAL 828

PAGE 01 SAIGON 15350 240446Z

21
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 SAL-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-06 H-02 INR-06 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0338
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL DANANG
USDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 15350

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SAIGON 15350
9/24/71

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: UPPER HOUSE RESOLUTION ON LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS

REF: (A) SAIGON 15243; (B) SAIGON 15244; (C) SAIGON 15318

1. AFTER PASSING "PROCLAMATION" ON PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION (REFS A AND B), UPPER HOUSE TURNED ITS ATTENTION SEPTEMBER 22 TO ALLEGATIONS OF FRAUD IN LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS. DEBATE WAS DEVOTED MAINLY TO REPORTS READ BY SEVEN SENATORS WHO HAD OBSERVED AUGUST 29 ELECTIONS IN VARIOUS PROVINCES, SOME OF THEM HAVING DONE SO ON BEHALF OF INTERIOR COMMITTEE WHICH HAD JURISDICTION OVER ELECTION LAW. ALL OF THESE REPORTS RAISED CHARGES OF ELECTION MISCONDUCT, THOUGH SERIOUSNESS OF ALLEGATIONS VARIED CONSIDERABLY. MOST SEVERE CONDEMNATIONS WERE THOSE BY HOA HAO OPPOSITION SENATOR TRAN DUY DON CONCERNING BAC LIEU AND BY ETHNIC CAMBODIAN SENATOR SON THAI NGUYEN CONCERNING VINH BINH.

(2)

2. SON THAI NGUYEN INTRODUCED DRAFT "PROCLAMATION" CRITICIZING FAIRNESS OF ELECTIONS IN 12 CONSTITUENCIES. THIS DRAFT ASKED

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PAGE 02 SAIGON 15350 240446Z

THAT LOWER HOUSE INVALIDATE ELECTIONS IN 8 CONSTITUENCIES, AND THAT EXECUTIVE DISMISS PROVINCE CHIEFS IN THESE SAME PROVINCES. FLOOR DEBATE RESULTED IN THARE CHANGES: (A) TERM "PROCLAMATION" WAS CHANGED TO "RESOLUTION" TO SHOW THAT THE PROBLEM WAS CONSIDERED LESS SERIOUS THAN THAT COVERED IN THE EARLIER "PROCLAMATION" ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. (B) THE SECTION ASKING THE LOWER HOUSE TO INVALIDATE ELECTIONS WAS DELETED, AFTER SENATOR NGUYEN VAN CHUC ARGUED THAT THIS WOULC CONSTITUTE UNWARRANTED INTERFERENCE BY ONE HOUSE OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN AFFAIRS OF THE OTHER, ALTHOUGH THE SENATORS THEN DECIDED TO SEND THE DOSSIER TO THE LOWER HOUSE FOR CONSIDERATION. (C) AN GIANG, BINH LONG, AND GIA DINH WERE DROPPED FROM SPECIFIC MENTION IN THE REMAINING SECTION ON DISMISSAL OF PROVINCE CHIEFS. (SOME OF THE CHARGES RAISED ABOUT AN GIANG APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN MOTIVATED LARGELY BY HOA HAO FACTIONALISM.) FINAL VOTE ON RESOLUTION WAS 24 IN FAVOR OUT OF 26 SENATORS PRESENT, THE OTHER TWO ABSTAINING. (TEXT REF C).

3. COMMENT: THE RESOLUTION HAS NO BINDING EFFECT. WHILE THE MORAL WEIGHT OF THE GESTURE IS LESSENED BY THE SMALL NUMBER OF SENATORS PARTICIPATING IN THE DEBATE, THE UPPER HOUSE HAS ENTERED THE LIST OF CRITICS OF THE SPECIFIED LOWER HOUSE ELECTION RESULTS.
BUNKER